

IDAHO WOLF MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT, JUNE 28 – JULY 11, 2008

Monitoring

On July 2, Kari Holder of the Nez Perce Tribe verified reproduction and found a rendezvous site of an additional pack in the Dworshak wolf zone. Holder then conducted outreach with a rancher near Dworshak reservoir where the sole radiocollared wolf died recently.

Isaac Babcock of the Nez Perce Tribe briefly investigated the area near Kamiah where a wolf killed a hound dog; he located some wolf sign, but he did not hear radio-collared wolves so did not make further effort to locate pups at that time. He also surveyed Lolo zone rendezvous sites, only to find that they aren't in use this year, though scattered wolf sign was located. More time will be spent on determining specific pack reproductive status later on. Babcock then trapped and radiocollared an adult male (suspected alpha) and subadult female wolf of a pack in the Lolo zone on July 6. He subsequently located their rendezvous site where he observed eight gray pups.

Jim Holyan of the Nez Perce Tribe surveyed in the Hells Canyon wolf zone following up on a reported pup sighting there; he found no wolf sign. He then obtained a pup count of a pack in unit 14, and also could account for several other wolves. Holyan also searched in the south fork of the Clearwater packs and found evidence that they denned or had early rendezvous site in same area as 2007, but had moved on.

From June 30 through July 3, Jason Husseman verified reproduction in two packs in the Stanley area qualifying both packs as breeding pairs.

July 9 – 11, Husseman hiked in to a historic den/rendezvous site used by a pack in the Sawtooth zone and found evidence that the site was again used this year. However, there was little in the way of fresh sign, and no response to howling, so it's likely the pack had moved to another rendezvous site. Husseman also followed up on a report of wolf activity from the public observation report form in the Yankee Fork of the Salmon River, and confirmed wolf sign (tracks and howling), but could not locate evidence of reproduction. This is probably the uncollared Yankee Fork pack, and further attempts will be made to place a radio collar in this pack.

Carter Niemeyer has been helping researchers collar wolves in the Sawtooth zone. On July 2 they collared a subadult female in the Edna ck country.

On July 4 a University of Montana research crew verified reproduction in a pack in the McCall zone.

On July 5, the UofM research crew verified two den sites that appeared to be used within a single wolf pack territory in the Sawtooth zone. They collected scats to check DNA to determine whether they are the same or different wolves.

On July 6, a Uof M research crew verified reproduction of two more packs in the Sawtooth zone.

Control

On June 28, officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services confirmed that wolves killed a calf on BLM land in the Pahsimeroi. This is the third confirmed depredation by this pack in the past two months. Wildlife Services removed two wolves in this depredation on July 2 and 3.

On June 28, Wildlife Services confirmed that a wolf killed a buck sheep on private land near Thorn Butte on Edna Creek, northwest of Idaho City.

On July 2, Wildlife Services confirmed that a wolf killed a lamb on a Boise National Forest allotment east of Smith's Ferry.

On July 8, Wildlife Services investigated a report that wolves had killed several sheep on a Boise National Forest grazing allotment in Lester Creek, just west of Anderson Ranch Reservoir. The carcasses had deteriorated to the point where WS could only come to a conclusion of "probable" wolf depredation on two sheep.

On July 9, Wildlife Services confirmed that wolves from the Galena pack killed a calf on private property near Obsidian.

On July 9, Wildlife Services confirmed that wolves killed a ewe and six lambs and injured another lamb that will probably succumb to its wounds. No signals from any radio collared wolves could be detected. The depredation occurred between Burgdorf and the Salmon River on the Payette National Forest. On July 11, Wildlife Services trapped and killed an adult, gray male and shot and killed another adult, gray male wolf that was seen chasing a guard dog. Control efforts have concluded unless there is another depredation.

On July 10, Wildlife Services confirmed that a pair of wolves killed a calf on private land on Smith's Prairie near Anderson Ranch Reservoir.

Management

On June 27th, district conservation officer Bill London investigated the killing of a wolf by a sheepherder on June 21 on Thorne Butte in Boise County. The killing was found to be legal under IC 36-1107 as the wolf was attacking the sheep herder's two border collies.

On June 12, Ben Cadwallader investigated a wolf collar on mortality signal near the Lowman transfer station. Closeness to roads and humans made it a possibly illegal kill. Ben found the collar, but could not determine the cause of the drop off except possible technology malfunction. No sign of a wolf was found in the area.

On May 15, Ben Cadwallader investigated an illegally taken wolf in Casner Creek, Lowman. Wolf was shot with a small caliber rifle, either .22-250 or .223). The investigation is ongoing.

On June 20, Fish and Game officer Mark Carson investigated a call along with Rick Williamson of Wildlife Services that a landowner and rancher from Arco had killed a wolf that was in with his cattle on the south side of Timbered Dome. The investigation concluded that the take was legal under 36-1107.

No word as of yet regarding the injunction court hearing on wolf delisting held May 29 in Missoula.

The collaborative effort among several producers, Idaho Fish and Game, Wildlife Services, USFS, Blaine County Commissioners, and Defenders of Wildlife is ongoing in the Ketchum area. Nonlethal efforts involving use of fladry, penning at night, hazing with hired trained technicians are ongoing to reduce conflicts between wolves and sheep in the area. Carter Niemeyer worked with Defender's technicians on July 7 inspecting sheep bands and nonlethal techniques being employed. They found a dead sheep that was being fed on by the sheep dog, but had died from illness.

Research

The University of Montana-Nez Perce Tribe-Idaho Fish and Game wolf monitoring research project (in its second year) is off to a good start again this year. The field season is 40 percent complete and the scat survey crew has already collected three times the numbers (to date, more than 600 samples) of genetic samples as they did all of last summer in the same areas. This represents not a change in population per se, but a change/refinement of the sampling protocol after learning from last year's first field season. The telemetry/howlbox crew continues to obtain data and pup counts (66 percent of study packs have pup counts/breeding pair determination) on packs in the four study areas and also continues to test and refine the howlboxes. Field work will continue through August.

Information and Education

Idaho Fish and Game also would like to remind people that when wolves are in the area, they should be aware that wolves may attack or injure dogs. It often helps to keep dogs in kennels or inside buildings at night and to not let them roam freely when humans are not around. When fresh wolf sign is found, place dogs on restraints and keep supervised. State law allows individuals to harass or kill a wolf attacking or molesting their domestic animals including pets. Anyone having concerns or problems with wolves close to their residence should inform the nearest Fish and Game office.

Please help us manage wolves by reporting wolf sightings on our Fish and Game observation form found at: http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/

Wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains (NRM) were delisted on March 28, 2008. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service successfully recovered and delisted the population with the help of state, federal, tribal and non-government partners. Management of these wolves now resides with the states of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. The 2002 legislatively approved Wolf Conservation and Management Plan along with the March

2008 Idaho Fish and Game Wolf Population Management Plan, as well as the laws and policies of the state now govern wolf management in Idaho. Wolves are now listed as a big game animal in Idaho and protected under the laws and policies of the state of Idaho.

Once wolves were delisted, USFWS decided to discontinue the publication of the NRM wolf weekly. Instead, for the time being, Idaho will continue publishing the Idaho specific updates. Along with the USFWS, contributors to the weekly historically have included the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the states of Idaho and Montana. Wyoming was reported on by the USFWS. You may review past wolf weekly publications on our wolf webpage and links along with all pertinent and updated wolf information and publications at:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>